

Message Text

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ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY S/S: DANDERSON:GB

APPROVED BY MR. ANDERSON

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 115452 TOSEC 050028

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KOOLAIID FOR HOUGHTON FROM ANDERSON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, PFOR

SUBJECT: MR. VANCE'S DRAFT OPENING STATEMENT FOR HIRC
APPEARANCE, MAY 9

FOLLOWING IS THE PROPOSED OPENING STATEMENT FOR THE MAY 9
TESTIMONY BEFORE ZABLOCKI'S COMMITTEE. YOU MAY WISH TO
HAVE MR. VANCE REVIEW IT PRIOR TO HIS RETURN TO WASHINGTON.
(WE UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE THE Q & A BOOK USED AT LAST WEEK'S
SFRC. WE WILL BE UPDATING IT FOR YOUR RETURN.)

BEGIN TEXT:

I WELCOME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS WITH YOU THE ADMINIS-
TRATION'S PROPOSALS TO SELL JET AIRCRAFT TO THREE MIDDLE
EAST COUNTRIES -- 75 F-16S AND 15 F-15S TO ISRAEL, 60
F-15S TO SAUDI ARABIA AND 50 F-5S TO EGYPT.

WE CONSIDER THESE PROPOSALS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO THE FOREIGN
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POLICY INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES. THESE SALES WILL
GIVE CRITICAL SUPPORT TO COUNTRIES THAT PLAY CRUCIAL ROLES
IN THE ATTAINMENT OF TWO ESSENTIAL FOREIGN POLICY OBJEC-
TIVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST -- THE CONCLUSION OF A COMPREHEN-
SIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT THAT WILL PROVIDE THE BEST GUARANTEE

FOR ISRAEL'S LONG-TERM SECURITY, AND THE SUPPORT OF

MODERATE GOVERNMENTS THAT WILL SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE REGION.

THE THREE COUNTRIES INVOLVED ARE EACH OF EXCEPTIONAL IMPORTANCE TO AMERICAN INTERESTS. OUR COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL'S SECURITY AND WELL-BEING IS AN ENDURING IMPERATIVE OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. THIS ADMINISTRATION, LIKE ITS PREDECESSORS, WILL REMAIN STEADFAST IN ITS DETERMINATION TO HELP ISRAEL MEET ITS SECURITY REQUIREMENTS.

EGYPT IS ALSO CRUCIALLY IMPORTANT TO AMERICAN INTERESTS. UNDER PRESIDENT SADAT'S COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP, EGYPT IS PLAYING A KEY ROLE IN THE SEARCH FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE AND IN THE PROMOTION OF MODERATE POLICIES GLOBALLY. THE UNITED STATES CLEARLY HAS AN INTEREST IN A SECURE EGYPT.

SAUDI ARABIA HAS CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATED ITS FRIENDSHIP TOWARD THE UNITED STATES. SAUDI ARABIA STRONGLY SUPPORTS A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT FOR THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. IT PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN PROMOTING A MODERATE ARAB CONSENSUS ON THE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS OF MIDDLE EAST PEACE. IT IS A MAJOR STABILIZING FORCE IN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL MATTERS AND IN DECISIONS AFFECTING THE PRICING AND SUPPLY OF OIL.

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THE AIRCRAFT WHICH WE PROPOSE MEET AN IMPORTANT NEED FOR EACH OF THE THREE COUNTRIES INVOLVED.

ISRAEL IS STRONGER NOW THAN AT ANY TIME IN ITS HISTORY. IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN ITS SUBSTANTIAL MARGIN OF MILITARY SUPERIORITY IN THE REGION, HOWEVER, ISRAEL WILL REQUIRE REPLACEMENTS FOR AIRCRAFT WHICH BECOME OBSOLETE IN THE 1980S. THE F-15S AND F-16S ARE INTENDED TO ASSURE THAT ISRAEL RETAINS ITS LEAD IN ADVANCED MILITARY TECHNOLOGY.

EGYPT, HAVING ENDED ITS ARMS SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION, HAS NOT RECEIVED SIGNIFICANT SUPPLIES OF AIRCRAFT OR PARTS IN ABOUT THREE YEARS. EGYPT IS UNDERSTANDABLY CONCERNED ABOUT THREATS BOTH FROM THE WEST AND SOUTH. THE F-5S WILL HELP EGYPT PRESENT A CREDIBLE AIR DEFENSE POSTURE AND ASSURE CONFIDENCE THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL ASSIST THAT COUNTRY IN MEETING ITS LEGITIMATE DEFENSE NEEDS.

SAUDI ARABIA NEEDS AN ADEQUATE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM TO PROTECT ITS VAST TERRITORY, INCLUDING WIDELY SCATTERED POPULATION CENTERS AND VULNERABLE OIL FACILITIES. SAUDI

ARABIA, WHOSE ARMED FORCES ARE AMONG THE SMALLEST IN THE REGION, HAS A LONG HISTORY OF IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICT WITH IRAQ. IRAQ FORCES, WELL SUPPLIED WITH THE MOST MODERN SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT, WILL HAVE MORE THAN TWICE THE NUMBER OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT AS SAUDI ARABIA IN 1983, EVEN AFTER THE SAUDI F-15S ARE DELIVERED. MOREOVER, ON THREE OCCASIONS IN THE RECENT PAST, SAUDI ARABIA HAS BEEN ATTACKED BY FORCES FROM SOUTH YEMEN. THE POTENTIAL THREAT FROM THIS QUARTER IS A MATTER OF CONTINUING SAUDI CONCERN.

WE ARE ASSURED THAT THE SAUDIS INTEND TO USE THE F-15 AIRCRAFT FOR THEIR OWN NATIONAL DEFENSE, AND NOT OTHERWISE. THE SAUDIS HAVE SAID THAT THEY DO NOT PLAN TO BASE THE F-15S AT ANY LOCATION THAT WOULD THREATEN OR PROVOKE
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ISRAEL.

IN OUR BEST JUDGMENT, THE PROPOSED SALES WILL MAINTAIN THE BASIC MILITARY BALANCE IN THE REGION. ISRAEL WILL RETAIN THE ABILITY TO DEFEND ITSELF. SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT WILL STRENGTHEN THEIR ABILITY TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST NATIONS DETERMINED TO UNDERMINE REGIONAL STABILITY.

IT IS OUR CONVICTION THAT THESE TRANSFERS WILL SUPPORT THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS. AT THIS DELICATE MOMENT, WE NEED THE MAXIMUM COOPERATION, CONFIDENCE AND TRUST OF ISRAEL, EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA. THE PREREQUISITE FOR ADDRESSING THE HARD CHOICES FOR PEACE IS THE FEELING OF SECURITY AND CONFIDENCE ON ALL SIDES. THE CREATION OF THESE CONDITIONS IS OUR PRIME OBJECTIVE IN PROPOSING THE AIRCRAFT SALES.

THESE SALES WILL MAINTAIN ESSENTIAL LINKS THAT PERMIT US TO PLAY THE FUNDAMENTAL ROLE OF A MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE PARTIES. ON THE OTHER HAND, FAILURE TO PROCEED WITH THE SALES WILL SERIOUSLY UNDERCUT THE AMERICAN ROLE IN THE PEACE PROCESS AND RAISE GRAVE DOUBTS ABOUT U.S. READINESS TO WORK WITH MODERATE GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGION.

I URGE THE CONGRESS TO JOIN THE ADMINISTRATION IN DEMONSTRATING OUR CLEAR AND FIRM COMMITMENT TO THOSE GOVERNMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST THAT HAVE CAST THEIR LOT FOR PEACE, ORDERLY ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND MODERATION.
END TEXT CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 Jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXT, SALES, FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, TOSEC, SPEECHES, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, CAT-A
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 May 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE115452
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DANDERSON:GB
Enclosure: KOOLAID FOR HOUGHTON FROM ANDERSON
Executive Order: OA
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: P850004-1624, P850004-1596
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780587/aaaacwvx.tel
Line Count: 165
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 22693aa3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 Jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2773955
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CHANGED> MCM 20040428
Subject: MR. VANCE'S DRAFT OPENING STATEMENT FOR HIRC APPEARANCE, MAY 9
TAGS: OVIP, PEPR, MASS, PFOR, US, EG, IS, SA, HIRC, (VANCE, CYRUS R)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/22693aa3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014